

A PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE TOOLKIT

**“ACTION FOR INTEGRITY AND DEMOCRACY
AGAINST DISINFORMATION” PROJECT**



**DEVELOPED BASED ON THE EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS
LEARNED FROM PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN
MONGOLIA AND THE PHILIPPINES.**



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Disclaimer

This toolkit was developed based on the experiences, evidence, and lessons learned from the implementation of the “Action for Integrity and Democracy Against Disinformation” project in Mongolia and the Philippines.

The project was supported by the Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative funded by the European Union. The views, findings, interpretations, and recommendations presented in this toolkit are those of the project team and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Union, the TED Initiative, or IRIM.

The approaches and tools presented in this publication are intended to support adaptation and learning. Users are encouraged to consider their own local contexts, target groups, available resources, and specific challenges when applying these approaches.

Feedback and Inquiries

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Section 1. About This Toolkit

What this toolkit is:

This toolkit distills evidence and practical experience from “Action for Integrity and Democracy Against Disinformation”, a project implemented jointly by the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) and the International Center for Innovation, Transformation and Excellence in Governance (INCITEGov) in the Philippines, with a grant from the European Union’s Team Europe Democracy (TED) initiative, from June 2025 to July 2026.

The project followed a connected evidence-to-action sequence: (1) mapping the disinformation landscape in each country; (2) studying community and youth vulnerabilities to disinformation; (3) co-designing evidence-informed interventions with stakeholders and target audiences; (4) piloting those interventions in Mongolia and the Philippines; (5) sharing lessons through a regional knowledge-sharing workshop; and (6) consolidating what was learned into this toolkit.

This toolkit turns that evidence and experience into practical guidance for organizations that want to understand, and respond to, disinformation in their own context: whether or not they were part of the original project.

What this toolkit is not:

- It is not an academic publication or a literature review.
- It is not a condensed reproduction of the project’s mapping, research, design, or pilot reports, those remain available as standalone references for readers who want the full evidence base.
- It is not a comprehensive media-literacy curriculum.
- It does not claim that the pilot interventions in Mongolia or the Philippines produced demonstrated, long-term behavioral or social change. Both country teams were explicit that their one-month pilots generated early, promising evidence of feasibility, reach, and engagement, not proof of sustained change. This toolkit preserves that same caution throughout.

Who this is for:

Civil society organizations, youth organizations, schools and educators, media and fact-checking organizations, local government or institutional actors, and future implementers of similar projects, anyone who needs to move from “we know disinformation is a problem here” to a concrete, locally adapted plan of action.

What this toolkit draws on:

This toolkit is built entirely from the project’s own documentation:

- *Mapping of Disinformation Landscape in Mongolia* (IRIM, July–November 2025)
- *Mapping of Disinformation Landscape in the Philippines* (INCITEGov, September 2025)
- *Youth Vulnerability to Disinformation and Its Determinants in Mongolia* (IRIM, February–May 2026)
- *Ayuda Project: Audience Research and Communications Strategy* (INCITEGov/GUGMA, Iloilo Province, March 2026, two FGDs) — the Philippines’ community-level evidence base for this project; no separate Philippines youth vulnerability study was conducted
- Intervention design documents for both countries (IRIM/MFCC in Mongolia; INCITEGov/BUILD Pilipinas in the Philippines)
- Interim and final narrative reports for both countries

Where a claim in this toolkit traces to one of these documents, it is presented as a project finding. Where the toolkit offers guidance beyond what these documents say, it is labeled as a practical recommendation or general good practice, per the working rules below.

How to use this toolkit:

Section	What it helps you do
1. About This Toolkit	Understand what this is, who it's for, and how to use it
2. Understanding the Local Disinformation Context	Rapidly assess how disinformation operates in your own setting
3. Identifying Audience Vulnerabilities	Work out who is most exposed and why
4. Designing an Evidence-Informed Intervention	Turn context and vulnerability findings into an intervention design
5. Intervention Options and Practical Activities	Choose and adapt concrete activities and formats
6. Monitoring, Reflection and Learning	Track what a pilot is actually achieving — and what it isn't
7. Lessons from Mongolia and the Philippines	See what worked, what didn't, and what transfers
8. Templates and Annexes	Use ready-made worksheets, checklists, and canvases

Each section stands on its own with its own checklists and templates. You do not need to read the toolkit cover to cover — go directly to the stage most relevant to where your organization is right now.

Before You Start: A Quick Orientation

Where to begin. If your organization has little or no existing research on disinformation in your context, start with Section 2. If you already understand your local disinformation landscape but haven't studied who is most vulnerable and why, start with Section 3. If you already have both a context assessment and an audience/vulnerability picture, you can go directly to Section 4 to design an intervention.

What this typically requires. Organizations adapting this approach should generally expect: a small core team (for example, a researcher/coordinator plus one or two facilitators or content leads); at least several weeks for context and audience research before any intervention is designed; and an implementation period meaningfully longer than one month — both country teams in this project recommended six to nine months as a more realistic timeframe for generating measurable learning (see Section 7). Budgets vary widely by context, but should account for small facilitator or peer-educator grants if a peer-led model is chosen (see Section 5).

A note on working with young people. Both pilots this toolkit draws on worked directly with youth, including participants under 18. Any organization adapting this approach should build in informed consent (with parental or guardian consent for minors), clear communication to participants about how their information will be used, and basic data-privacy practice when collecting survey, interview, or focus-group data. This toolkit does not provide a full safeguarding framework — apply your own child-safeguarding and data-protection policies, or seek specialist guidance, before working directly with minors.

Common risks to plan for. Both country teams encountered practical obstacles worth anticipating rather than discovering mid-implementation: difficulty finding local partners with stable capacity, competing events or academic calendars affecting attendance, and the temptation to read reach or engagement numbers as proof of impact. Section 6 sets out how both teams responded to these — it is worth reading before you begin, not only afterward.

A note on how findings are presented

Throughout, three kinds of statements are kept visually and linguistically distinct:

- **Project findings:** specific facts, figures, or patterns documented in the project's own reports.
- **Practical recommendations:** guidance this toolkit derives from those findings for how another organization might act.
- **General good practice:** guidance not specific to this project, used only where the project materials are silent.

A general recommendation is never presented as a proven project result. Claims about the pilots' impact are also kept proportionate: the project itself distinguished reach and participation (largely demonstrated) from sustained behavioral change (not measured, given the one-month implementation window) and this toolkit holds that same line.

Section 2. Understanding the Local Disinformation Context

Before designing any intervention, an organization needs a working picture of how disinformation actually operates where it works: who produces and spreads it, through which channels, around which topics, and at which moments. The project's own sequence began here for a reason: the pilot interventions in both countries were built on the mapping findings, not designed first and justified afterward.

How the project did it:

The two countries used different methods, reflecting how well-documented each context already was.

- **Mongolia (IRIM):** A mixed-methods rapid mapping (July–November 2025) combining desk review, 15 semi-structured key informant interviews, and a quantitative analysis of 1,618 fact-checked items published by Mongolia's two fact-checking organizations between January 2020 and September 2025.
- **Philippines (INCITEGov):** A desk review and thematic synthesis of academic research, investigative journalism, fact-checking archives, policy documents, and international reports, covering 2016–2025, a deliberate choice given how extensively Philippine disinformation is already documented by scholars, fact-checkers, and international organizations.

Both studies covered a similar underlying set of elements: who is behind disinformation, how it is produced and spread, what it says, when it intensifies, what is already being done about it, and where the gaps are.

Table 1. Do/Avoid/Adapt/: Choosing a research method

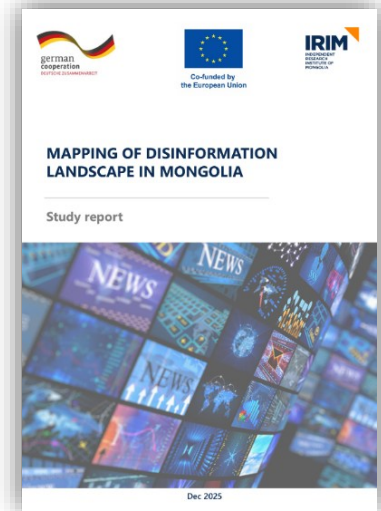
Do	Avoid	Adapt
Match the method to how well your context is already documented: a desk review can be entirely credible where a topic is well studied, as the Philippines mapping shows.	Don't assume a desk review alone is "lesser" than a mixed-methods study, the right method depends on the evidence base already available, not on rigor for its own sake.	If time is short, a scaled-down version of Mongolia's approach: a handful of key informant interviews plus a secondary analysis of existing fact-checks — can substitute for a full academic study.
Use existing fact-checking archives where they exist; they are a fast way to identify real patterns.	Don't treat pre-project consultation workshops or events as primary research data — cite them as background, as the Philippines report did.	Where no fact-checking organization exists locally, adapt by using media-monitoring reports or partner NGOs' existing documentation instead.

Based on the common elements examined in both mapping studies, the following are recommended for inclusion in a [Template 1: Rapid Context-Assessment Checklist](#):

1. **Actors**-government/state institutions or officials; domestic politicians, parties, or dynasties; foreign or foreign-aligned actors; PR firms or paid strategists; media outlets and journalists; social media influencers; troll networks or paid amplifiers; ordinary citizens as unwitting amplifiers.
2. **Channels and behaviors**-Which platform dominates (in both countries: Facebook)? Does content migrate from public platforms into private messaging and then offline? Are there signs of coordinated/inauthentic activity? Are media outlets financially or editorially entangled with political or business interests?
3. **Content and narratives** -What themes recur (health, socio-political events, and financial scams in Mongolia; historical revisionism, smearing of opponents, corruption, and aid-related narratives in the Philippines)? What formats dominate — fabricated narratives and doctored images remain far more common in both countries than deepfakes, which are emerging but not yet dominant.
4. **Timing factors** - elections and campaign periods; crises; anniversaries of politically sensitive events; geopolitical flashpoints.
5. **Current responses and gaps**-Legal/regulatory measures and their misuse risks; fact-checking organizations; media/information literacy efforts and how far they reach marginalized groups; civil society coalitions and whether they operate only around elections or year-round.

Country experience: Mongolia

Project findings. Actors identified: government and state institutions (as both originators and distributors, particularly around reputation management), domestic politicians and parties (named most frequently as the principal "manufacturers" of disinformation), foreign actors-Russia (a documented network of pro-Russian Facebook accounts) and China (subtler, relationship-based media influence), PR and media teams, so-called "pocket websites" with no real editorial structure (an estimated 300 of about 390 registered news sites), social media influencers, troll networks (an estimated 400,000 fake accounts created in 2023), and ordinary citizens as amplifiers. Facebook carried 89% of verified false or misleading content, versus 11% through traditional media. Content clustered around health (especially anti-vaccine narratives), socio-political events, and financial scams. Disinformation is linked to a documented decline in interpersonal, media, and government trust, alongside a 2025 World Press Freedom ranking of 102nd of 180 (IRIM, 2025).



Country experience: the Philippines

Project findings. A hierarchical production chain: political dynasties, candidates, and state/security actors fund campaigns; PR and advertising strategists design them; influencers, troll farms, and grassroots volunteers disseminate them, with sympathetic media sometimes amplifying further. Persistent themes include historical revisionism (particularly around the Marcos family and Martial Law), smearing of opponents, whitewashing of corruption, false messaging around government relief aid (*ayuda*), and fabricated crisis content. Content moves from Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube into private messaging apps and then offline, letting debunked claims resurface around anniversaries or crises. Groups most affected: the urban and rural poor (particularly around *ayuda*-related scams), journalists and civil society actors (facing red-tagging and legal harassment), youth, indigenous peoples, and overseas Filipino workers.

What appears common across both countries:

- A production chain disguised as grassroots activity: professionally designed content deliberately amplified through influencers, troll networks, and ordinary citizens to appear organic.
- Facebook as the dominant vector, migrating into private messaging and offline networks.
- Disinformation is intensifying around elections, crises, and anniversaries rather than circulating at a constant level.
- Media ownership and financial entanglement as a structural enabler, Mongolia's "silence contracts" (informal payments to outlets in exchange for not publishing critical coverage) and "pocket websites" (outlets with no real editorial structure, effectively controlled by a funder), and the Philippines' politically aligned "sympathetic media outlets," describe closely related dynamics using different local terms.
- Erosion of institutional trust (media, judiciary, government) and real press-freedom risks for journalists in both countries.

Where the two contexts genuinely differ:

- **Geopolitical framing:** Mongolia's mapping foregrounds foreign state actors (Russia, China); the Philippines foregrounds a domestic political-dynasty-driven ecosystem tied to national narratives (historical revisionism, aid politicization).
- **Legal environment:** Mongolia's Article 13.14 (Criminal Code) and the Philippines' cyber-libel provision are both criticized for vague definitions and use against journalists, but they are distinct instruments in different systems.
- **Research method:** interview-based mixed methods in Mongolia versus desk review in the Philippines, meaning quantitative figures from the two reports (e.g., Mongolia's 89% social-media share of verified disinformation versus the Philippines' 67% public concern about encountering

false information) measure different things and should not be compared as if they were the same metric.

Table 2. Do/Avoid/Adapt/: Understanding the local context

Do	Avoid	Adapt
Use the actor/ channel/ content/ timing/ response checklist as a starting structure for your own rapid assessment.	Don't force a numeric comparison between Mongolia and the Philippines findings , the underlying data and methods differ too much.	Adapt the checklist's specific examples (Facebook, <i>ayuda</i> , pocket websites) to your own context's dominant platform, recurring scam narrative, or media structure.
Look for local equivalents of "silence contracts" or "sympathetic media", financial or ownership entanglements recur as an enabler.	Don't assume deepfakes are the main problem by default — both studies found simpler fabricated narratives still dominate.	If no local fact-checking organization exists, adapt the "quantitative analysis of fact-checks" step using whatever verified media-monitoring data your context has.

Section 3. Identifying Audience Vulnerabilities

Understanding the landscape (Section 2) tells you what's circulating and how. This section addresses who is more or less susceptible within your population, and why. The project addressed this differently in each country and because the two approaches measure genuinely different things, this section keeps them distinct rather than merging them into one model.

A note on what "vulnerability" meant in each study:

In Mongolia, vulnerability was measured directly and quantitatively: youth-focused study (400 respondents, ages 16–25, in Ulaanbaatar, Khuvsgul, and Tuv provinces) built a Disinformation Vulnerability Index (DVI) from experimental tasks and self-report measures.

In the Philippines, the available evidence is INCITEGov's Ayuda Project audience research: qualitative research (two focus groups, 7 beneficiaries and 7 vulnerable non-beneficiaries of government aid, in Iloilo Province) feeding directly into a communications strategy, rather than a standalone measurement of disinformation susceptibility. This FGD-based research is the confirmed community-level evidence base for the Philippines pilot.

Mongolia: measuring vulnerability directly

Project findings. The DVI combined three measured dimensions: ability to distinguish false information, belief in true information, and willingness to share false information, on a 1–5 scale¹. The average DVI was 2.58, indicating moderate vulnerability. Component scores: identifying false information 2.85; trust in true information 2.71; sharing tendency 2.18.

The moderate DVI does *not* mean youth are simply resilient: 51.5% disbelieved or doubted at least some true information, pointing to a broader erosion of trust in information generally, a pattern the study itself described as "skepticism without verification."

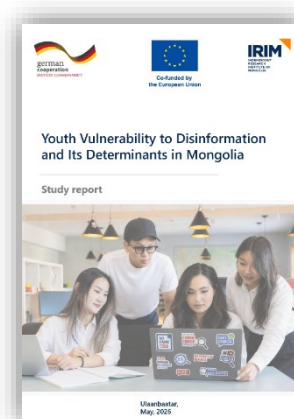


Table 3. Key findings of Youth Vulnerability study in Mongolia

Factor category	Share of variation explained	What this means
Demographics (age, gender, education, income, location)	4.8%	Vulnerability is not concentrated in one demographic group
Media and Information Literacy (self-assessed)	0% (not significant)	High self-rated literacy did not predict lower vulnerability
Cognitive, motivational, and emotional factors combined	27.9%	The strongest known drivers of vulnerability

Within that set: cognitive capacity ($\beta=0.290$, especially accepting information as true without skepticism) was strongest, followed by motivated reasoning ($\beta=0.218$, especially social conformity and resistance to correction), then emotional arousal ($\beta=0.207$, especially fear and anger).

These mechanisms varied by context: urban youth showed emotional arousal as the strongest predictor; rural youth showed no significant emotional effect, with cognitive capacity and motivated reasoning dominating instead. By age: all three factors mattered at 16–18; motivated reasoning became strongest by 22–25, while emotional arousal's influence declined with age.

On community information spaces: 89.5% get information mainly through close social networks (friends first, then family); 81% cite social media as a source. Three information-behavior clusters emerged: Passive Receivers (35.2%), Active Seekers (32.9%), and Isolated Consumers (31.9%), with Active Seekers showing the *highest* average vulnerability (more exposure meant more opportunity to encounter and believe/share false content).

¹ Note: 1 = Low vulnerability; 5 = High vulnerability.

Table 4. Do/Avoid/Adapt: using the Mongolia findings

Do	Avoid	Adapt
Treat "moderate vulnerability" scores with caution — check whether the real story is distrust of everything, not just susceptibility to falsehoods.	Don't assume demographic targeting will reliably identify who is vulnerable — it explained under 5% of variation here.	Adapt interventions to context: emotional-regulation content may matter more in urban settings; source-evaluation skills may matter more in rural settings.
Test literacy interventions against actual behavior, not self-assessed confidence.	Don't assume more active information-seeking is protective — Active Seekers were the <i>most</i> vulnerable cluster here.	If a full quantitative index isn't feasible, adapt its underlying logic (detect / trust-in-truth / willingness-to-share) into a lighter survey or qualitative check.

The Philippines: understanding a specific audience through qualitative research

Project findings. The FGDs (Focus Group Discussions) describe a segment called "The Online Ilonggo": registered voters aged roughly 20–40 in Iloilo Province, low- to lower-middle-income, current or potential *ayuda* beneficiaries, and heavy but passive Facebook users. Key findings:

- **Low political engagement, not apathy:** respondents described livelihood and family concerns crowding out political attention, not disinterest by choice.
- **Passive, algorithm-driven information consumption:** respondents described encountering news "by scrolling," with Facebook dominant, radio (Bombo Radyo, RMN) secondary, and Reddit/news sites used only by some younger respondents.
- ***Ayuda* seen as necessary but temporary relief:** generally viewed positively even as respondents criticized how it's distributed.
- **A documented *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) dynamic:** several respondents described feeling personally indebted to the official who facilitated their aid access, even while recognizing the money is public funds.
- **Fairness, not the existence of *ayuda*, is the central grievance:** respondents wanted more systematic, data-driven, transparent beneficiary selection.
- **Message-testing showed segment-specific resonance:** beneficiaries responded more to a fairness/non-politicization frame; non-beneficiaries responded more to a public-funds/taxpayer-rights frame; a confrontational "don't be an *epal* [credit-grabber]" frame tested as relatable but risked alienating less politically engaged respondents.

With 14 total respondents in one province, these are illustrative, in-depth qualitative findings, a genuinely different evidentiary weight than Mongolia's 400-respondent quantitative study, and this toolkit does not treat the two as directly comparable.

Table 5. Do/Avoid/Adapt: using the Philippines findings

Do	Avoid	Adapt
Take low political engagement as a design constraint — meet the audience where their actual priorities are (livelihood, family, fairness).	Don't treat these FGD findings as generalizable prevalence data the way Mongolia's DVI scores are.	Adapt the <i>utang na loob</i> / patronage-framing insight to other contexts where aid or services are distributed through informal or personalized channels.
Pre-test message frames with your actual audience segments before rolling out broadly — beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries responded differently here.	Don't assume one message frame works for an entire community.	If full FGDs aren't feasible, adapt the core method (a small number of structured conversations plus simple message-route testing) as a lightweight way to sense-check messaging.

A combined framework for assessing your own audience:

- **Choose a quantitative approach (like Mongolia's DVI) when:** you need a defensible baseline/endline comparison; you have resources for a reasonably large, structured sample; you want subgroup breakdowns with statistical confidence.
- **Choose a qualitative approach (like the Philippines FGDs) when:** you need to understand *why* an audience believes or shares what it does, in their own words; you are testing specific message frames before a campaign; your audience or issue is narrow enough for a small number of in-depth conversations to inform design; time or budget is limited.
- **Either way, ask of any audience:**
 - [] Do they distinguish false from true information reliably, or are they broadly distrustful of *all* information?
 - [] What role do emotional reactions play in how they process and share content?
 - [] Do social norms and group belonging shape what they accept more than the content's accuracy does?
 - [] What are their actual daily priorities, and does your message connect to those — or compete with them?
 - [] Where does their information environment sit on the passive-to-active spectrum, and what does that mean for how content should reach them?

Common threads across both countries:

- **Social trust matters more than raw literacy.** Mongolia found self-assessed MIL didn't predict vulnerability, and that social conformity/trust in sources was a significant driver; the Philippines found information consumed passively through trusted feeds and personal networks.
- **Passive information environments dominate.** Mongolia's youth get information mainly through close social networks and social media; the Philippines' "Online Ilonggo" segment consumes news by "just scrolling."
- **Demographics alone are a weak targeting tool.** Statistically confirmed in Mongolia (4.8% of variance); suggested indirectly in the Philippines, where disengagement cut across the sampled groups regardless of age or occupation.

Where the two contexts differ, and shouldn't be merged:

- **Scope:** a youth sample across three locations, not a nationwide sample (Mongolia — Ulaanbaatar, Tuv, and Khuvsgul provinces) vs. hyperlocal and adult-focused (Philippines, Iloilo Province specifically).
- **What's being addressed:** general disinformation vulnerability across topics (Mongolia) vs. one specific narrative cluster — the politicization of government aid (Philippines).
- **Purpose of the data:** measurement/diagnosis (Mongolia) vs. direct input into a specific persuasion campaign already in design (Philippines).

Section 4. Designing an Evidence-Informed Intervention

This section shows how each country translated Section 2 and 3 findings into an actual intervention design, and distills a reusable design process.

The project's approach: co-design, not top-down design

Both countries built their intervention designs through structured stakeholder and audience engagement, not by researchers alone. In practice, a co-design workshop is a facilitated working session, typically half a day to a full day, that brings target-audience members together with relevant stakeholders (educators, media, civil society) to react to study findings and jointly shape what an intervention should actually look like, rather than having it designed for them in advance.

- **Mongolia:** A co-design workshop (7 May 2026) brought together young people, media, education, and CSO representatives to discuss the youth vulnerability study findings and identify engaging ways to reach young audiences. Participants recommended interactive and peer-led learning, opportunities for young people to create content, youth-friendly communication channels, and examples reflecting everyday online experience, recommendations that directly shaped the four-part pilot and its "Nyagtaldag bol COOL" ("Checking is Cool") campaign identity.
- **Philippines:** INCITEGov's audience research directly informed a Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) framework, a widely used communications approach that structures messaging around what people know, how they feel, and what they do. It was developed with GUGMA (a communications consultancy engaged by INCITEGov to lead the audience research) and then operationalized with BUILD Pilipinas (a youth-led civic digital organization), moving through Knowledge → Attitude → Practice objectives.

Photo 1. Participants during the co-design workshops in Mongolia.



Two theory-of-change statements, one underlying logic:

Project finding. Reflecting the results of co-design discussion, both countries wrote an explicit theory of change using an if-then structure. The Philippines' hyperlocal model theory of change: if hyperlocal information ecosystems are strengthened through youth-led content production, journalism-based editorial standards, and research-driven audience insights, *then* communities gain access to more credible, relevant, engaging civic information; *if* content is further shaped by continuous community feedback, *then* it stays aligned with real needs and gaps; *if* residents are engaged as contributors rather than passive consumers, *then* the platform becomes a participatory civic space rather than a broadcast channel, building resilience to misinformation and political capture over time.

Mongolia's implicit logic (drawn from its stated objectives and design) follows a comparable chain: knowledge and skills (training) → trusted peer transmission (info ambassadors) → reinforced messaging and behavioral nudges (digital campaign) → sustained engagement (online community).

Practical recommendation: Write your own theory of change as an explicit *if-then chain* before choosing activities. Template 3: Theory of Change Canvas is provided in Section 8.

The SBCC objective structure (from the Philippines): The Philippines' SBCC framework set three linked objective types, each with its own indicators:

Table 6. The Philippines' SBCC framework set

Level	Objective (Philippines example)	Type of indicator
Knowledge	Establish that <i>ayuda</i> is a public service, not a personal favor	% agreeing aid is public-funded; engagement on educational content
Attitude	Reduce the <i>utang na loob</i> mindset; build a sense of fairness and dignity	% agreeing aid should not be politicized; sentiment in comments
Practice	Encourage citizens to be more critical of politicians using aid for gain	Self-reported likelihood of withholding support from such politicians; discussion participation

Practical recommendation: This Knowledge → Attitude → Practice structure, and its logic of choosing indicators appropriate to each level, is reusable well beyond the *ayuda* context — see the Template 4: Intervention Objectives and Indicators Worksheet in Section 8.

Mongolia's four-component design: Considering the CBS study findings and Co-design workshop results, Mongolia's design followed its own four-component structure, moving from direct training through peer-led local outreach to a supporting digital campaign. It is presented below in the same table format as the Philippines' summary above, purely to make the two designs easier to compare side by side.

Table 7. Mongolia's four-component design

Component	What it involved	What it aimed to achieve
1. Youth training	A full-day training covering source verification, recognizing emotional manipulation, basic fact-checking tools, and AI-generated content recognition. Reached 78 participants across three locations.	Build the foundational knowledge and skills identified as the strongest driver of vulnerability in the DVI study.
2. Training of trainers (peer educators)	Six trainers (two per location) were selected from initial trainees and given facilitation training plus a small grant to run follow-up activities.	Create trusted local messengers who can extend reach through relationships the target audience already trusts.
3. Local outreach by peer educators	Trained peer educators ran follow-up activities in their own communities — school sessions, knowledge competitions, and open content competitions — reaching 262 further participants.	Extend the training's reach and normalize verification behavior through peer networks, at low additional cost.
4. Digital and community campaign	The "Nyagtaldag bol COOL" ("Checking is Cool") campaign distributed posters, reels, and video through a youth media-literacy Facebook/Instagram page, local partner channels, and youth-oriented influencer collaboration, generating 600,000+ views.	Reinforce and sustain the training and peer-led messages at a scale beyond what direct training alone could reach.

Practical recommendation: A training-then-peer-cascade-then-campaign sequence like this is a low-cost way to combine direct skill-building with wider reach, without needing a named behavior-change framework — what matters is that each stage has a clear purpose feeding into the next.

Common design principles across both countries:

- **Evidence-based tailoring.** Mongolia differentiated training content by setting (urban: emotional-manipulation recognition and "pause before reacting"; rural: source evaluation and critical thinking) based directly on its DVI findings. The Philippines tailored message frames by audience segment (beneficiaries vs. non-beneficiaries) based directly on its FGD findings.
- **Trusted, embedded messengers rather than outside experts.** Mongolia used peer "info ambassadors" recruited from the training itself; the Philippines used youth creatives and journalism students embedded in a hyperlocal platform.
- **Light-touch editorial/verification standards,** not heavy institutional fact-checking. The Philippines' "Trust, Verification, and Information Integrity" component introduced basic verification rules,

content classification (informational / explanatory / community-generated / opinion), and simple correction procedures — deliberately lightweight rather than a full editorial newsroom.

- **Built-in feedback loops.** Mongolia's online community for continuous engagement; the Philippines' "Community Intelligence and Narrative Feedback" system using social listening, polls, and structured discussion prompts.
- **Message tone matched to the audience.** The Philippines explicitly chose a non-confrontational "Inquisitive Influencer" tone, asking questions rather than making accusations, because its FGDs showed the audience avoids political conflict; a more confrontational route tested as relatable but risked alienating disengaged respondents.

Table 8. Do/Avoid/Adapt: Intervention design

Do	Avoid	Adapt
Run your own co-design step with target audience members and relevant stakeholders before finalizing activities, both countries' final designs changed as a result of this step.	Don't skip message-frame testing if your issue is politically sensitive, the Philippines' three-route test revealed real differences in what resonated with whom.	Adapt the "light-touch" editorial model (classify, verify basics, correct openly) to any content-production intervention, not just Facebook pages.
Write an explicit if-then theory of change before choosing specific activities.	Don't assume one tone fits all audiences, a confrontational frame that works for politically engaged audiences may backfire with disengaged ones.	Adapt peer-messenger models (info ambassadors, youth creatives) to whatever trusted role already exists in your community — teachers, local officials, community elders, etc.

Before finalizing an intervention design, use this checklist to pressure-test it against the evidence and principles set out earlier in this section. If you can't yet answer one of these questions with confidence, treat that as a signal to revisit the relevant part of Sections 2–4 rather than move ahead regardless.

A design worksheet

- [] What does Section 2/3 evidence say about who is vulnerable, and through which mechanism (cognitive, emotional, social, or a specific narrative)?
- [] What is your theory of change, stated as an explicit if-then chain?
- [] What are your Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice objectives (or equivalent), each with at least one realistic indicator?
- [] Who are the trusted messengers your audience already listens to?
- [] What is your light-touch verification/editorial approach?
- [] What feedback mechanism will tell you how the audience is actually receiving this, while it's still running?
- [] Has this design been reviewed with actual target-audience members and local stakeholders, not designed for them in isolation?

Section 5. Intervention Options and Practical Activities

This section catalogues the concrete activity types both pilots used, organized by function, so another organization can select and adapt rather than start from a blank page.

As a general planning guide: skills-training sessions can typically be designed and delivered within one to two weeks; peer-educator or "info ambassador" models add roughly another two to four weeks to recruit, train, and support trainers; and hyperlocal content platforms or digital campaigns usually need a longer runway — at least four weeks — to build an audience and establish a working content pipeline. These are illustrative starting points, not fixed rules; adjust them to your own context and capacity.

1.Direct skills training: Project finding (Mongolia). Training combining roughly 40% conceptual input and 60% hands-on practice: source verification, recognizing emotional manipulation, basic fact-checking tools, AI-generated content recognition, ethical AI use, quizzes, and content creation. Content was deliberately differentiated — urban sessions emphasized recognizing emotional triggers and "pausing before reacting"; rural sessions emphasized source evaluation and critical thinking. The training reached 78 participants and used International Fact-Checking Network (via the Mongolian Fact-Checking Center) accredited certification.

Practical recommendation: A roughly 60/40 practice-to-theory ratio, and differentiating content by the specific vulnerability mechanism identified in your own Section 3 assessment (not a single generic curriculum), are both directly transferable design choices.

2.Peer educator / "info ambassador" models: Project finding (Mongolia). Six trainers (two per location) were selected from initial trainees and given facilitation training plus a small grant to run follow-up activities. Peer-led activities reached 262 further participants across locations, using formats such as school-wide sessions, knowledge competitions, and open content competitions for youth aged 16–25.

Practical recommendation: This "train, then fund a small number of trained peers to extend reach" model is a low-cost way to multiply a training's reach through trusted local relationships rather than repeated outside delivery.

3.Content creation and digital campaigns: Project finding (Mongolia). The "Nyagtaldag bol COOL" ("Checking is Cool") campaign combined multiple formats (posters, reels, video) distributed via a youth media-literacy Facebook/Instagram page, local partner channels, and youth-oriented influencer collaboration, generating more than 600,000 views across channels.

Practical recommendation: Pairing a memorable local campaign identity (a name, a tagline) with multi-format content and existing youth-facing channels, rather than a single generic public-service announcement, appears to be a transferable approach to reach, though reach figures alone should not be read as evidence of attitude or behavior change (see Section 6).

Photo 2. Highlights from pilot intervention activities in Mongolia, May–July 2026.



4. Hyperlocal information platforms: Project finding (Philippines). BUILD Pilipinas, in partnership with INCITEGov, established a youth-led Facebook page (BUILD Iloilo) combining four components: (1) SBCC-informed content production with a pitch-produce-review-publish workflow; (2) a community intelligence/narrative feedback system using social listening and structured prompts; (3) a trust and verification system (content classification, correction protocols); and (4) participatory civic engagement (residents submitting stories and responding to prompts). The pilot produced 21 content pieces with 43 volunteers/correspondents, extended distribution through 155 Facebook groups, and generated approximately 100 comments/feedback responses.

Practical recommendation: Where Facebook (or another platform) already dominates local information consumption, building a credible, youth-led, lightly-verified hyperlocal presence *on that same platform*, rather than trying to redirect the audience elsewhere, is a transferable strategy documented as feasible here.

5. Message framing and testing: Project finding (Philippines). Three message routes were tested with FGD participants before rollout: a fairness/non-politicization frame (resonated more with beneficiaries), a public-funds/rights frame (resonated more with non-beneficiaries), and a confrontational "don't be an *epal*" frame (relatable but riskier). The eventual campaign used a non-confrontational, question-based "Inquisitive Influencer" tone, deliberately avoiding direct criticism of politicians.

Practical recommendation: Test at least two or three candidate message frames with real audience members before full rollout, particularly on politically sensitive topics, and expect different segments to respond differently to the same message.

Photo 3. BUILD Iloilo Volunteer Open House to engage young creatives and community volunteers in hyperlocal storytelling



Table 9. Do / Avoid / Adapt

Do	Avoid	Adapt
Combine formats (training + peer dissemination + digital content) rather than relying on one channel alone, both pilots did this.	Don't assume a single national campaign message works everywhere, Mongolia differentiated urban/rural content deliberately.	Adapt the peer-educator micro-grant model to any context with an existing trusted-messenger role (teachers, local officials, community leaders).
Test message frames with real audience segments first.	Don't build a heavy institutional fact-checking operation if a light-touch verification/ classification/ correction system will do, the Philippines model deliberately stayed lightweight.	Adapt hyperlocal-platform components to whatever platform actually dominates locally — the logic (locally-produced, lightly-verified, community-fed) transfers even if the platform doesn't.

Section 6. Monitoring, Reflection and Learning

A one-month pilot can show quite a lot, and prove much less. Both country teams were unusually careful to keep that distinction in view throughout implementation, rather than letting early enthusiasm translate into overstated claims. This section preserves that same caution, because it is one of the most transferable lessons the project has to offer: knowing what your evidence can and cannot support is as important as collecting the evidence in the first place.

Levels of evidence: what was actually measured

To keep this distinction concrete, it helps to separate "evidence of activity" from "evidence of change," and to be specific about which rung of that ladder each result actually sits on:

Table 10. Levels of evidence: what was actually measured:

Level	Mongolia	Philippines
Reach / participation	78 direct trainees; 262 further peer-led participants; 600,000+ campaign views	21 content pieces; 43 volunteers/correspondents; distribution to 155 Facebook groups
Engagement	Content competitions (9 eligible entries in Tuv; 30+ in Khuvsgul)	~100 comments/feedback responses across platform and partner groups
Immediate learning/confidence	Average self-assessed knowledge rose from 3.54 to 4.56 (5-point scale)	Not separately measured; qualitative observation that localized content generated stronger engagement than generic messaging
Behavioral intention	Not separately isolated from the knowledge measure above	Not measured at population level in this pilot
Observed practice	Not measured within the pilot period	Not measured within the pilot period
Sustained/longer-term change	Explicitly not measured — the short implementation window did not allow for this	Explicitly not measured — described as "feasibility and narrative testing," not evidence of behavior change

Reading across the table, a common pattern emerges in both countries: the strength of evidence varies across different levels of results, with more immediate outputs being easier to capture than longer-term changes in attitudes and behaviours. Reach and engagement were well documented in both contexts, while immediate learning outcomes were captured, at least in part, in Mongolia. However, behavioural intentions, observed practices, and sustained changes were not measured in either country. Both teams acknowledged this limitation and avoided drawing conclusions beyond what the available evidence could support.

In Mongolia, post-training responses indicated improved recognition of manipulation tactics and greater self-reported caution when engaging with online information. These are encouraging signals of learning and awareness, but the project also noted that they should not be interpreted as evidence of sustained behaviour change without follow-up measurement. Similarly, the Philippines pilot concluded that its findings represented "credible signs of feasibility and learning," while not constituting demonstrated population-level changes in attitudes or behaviour.

This distinction is important when interpreting and communicating results. While reach and engagement indicators provide valuable insights into the visibility and immediate response to an intervention, they do not necessarily indicate changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviours. Maintaining a clear distinction between different levels of results helps strengthen the credibility of findings and supports informed decision-making among those who rely on the evidence.

For future interventions, being transparent about what the available evidence can and cannot demonstrate is an important part of responsible learning and adaptation. It enables implementers, funders, and partners to better understand what worked, what requires further exploration, and how future interventions can be strengthened.

Practical recommendation: Use the six-level structure above (reach → engagement → immediate learning → behavioral intention → observed practice → sustained change) to plan your own M&E from the start, and be explicit — in your own reporting — about which levels you can actually claim evidence for.

Challenges encountered, and how they were addressed

Measuring results honestly is only half the picture. The other half is what got in the way of implementation itself, since these obstacles often explain why certain levels of evidence were within reach and others weren't. Both country teams kept a running account of the practical difficulties we encountered, and several of our responses are worth carrying into other contexts:

Table 11. Challenges and Mitigation

Challenge	Mongolia's response	Philippines' response
Difficulty finding sustainable local partners	Partnered with public educational institutions (polytechnic colleges, lifelong learning centres) instead of relying solely on CSOs	Not applicable in the same form; INCITEGov partnered directly with an existing digital civic organization (BUILD Pilipinas)
Political/topic sensitivity	Not a central issue in Mongolia's pilot	Framed messaging around fairness, transparency, and need rather than partisan attribution
Trust not created by accuracy alone	Addressed via peer/trusted-messenger delivery	Addressed via locally embedded youth communicators and recognizable community concerns
Weak editorial safeguards on existing platforms	Not directly applicable	BUILD Pilipinas introduced structured pitching, review, verification, classification, and correction procedures
Short implementation period overlapping exams/holidays	Training delivered in person where possible; follow-up coordination moved online	Intervention explicitly framed as feasibility/narrative testing rather than full-scale rollout
Reliance on self-reported, short-term outcomes	Explicitly flagged as a limitation for future follow-up (3–6 months)	Explicitly flagged: future phases should establish baseline indicators and follow-up measurement from the outset
Limited availability of student peer educators	Recruited young teachers from partner institutions instead when student availability was constrained	Not applicable in the same form

A couple of patterns cut across both columns. First, where the original plan assumed a certain kind of partner or participant would be available, a CSO with permanent staff, a pool of student peer educators, both teams found that assumption tested by reality, and both adapted by turning to whichever locally embedded institution or group was actually available, rather than forcing the original plan to work regardless. Second, where trust depended on more than accuracy alone, both teams reached for people the audience already trusted, peer educators, youth communicators — rather than simply producing more content or more corrections. Neither adaptation was part of the original design; both emerged directly from encountering the challenge in the field, which is itself a reason to build in enough flexibility to adapt mid-course.

Table 12. Do / Avoid / Adapt

Do	Avoid	Adapt
Plan your M&E framework — including what you will <i>not</i> be able to claim — before implementation begins, not after.	Don't schedule a short pilot during school exam periods, summer holidays, or competing local events (e.g., a marathon affected Mongolia's Ulaanbaatar training turnout).	Adapt the "recruit young teachers instead of students" fallback to any context where your intended peer-educator pool becomes unavailable.
Report reach and engagement figures honestly as reach and engagement — not as proxies for behavior change.	Don't rely solely on self-reported pre/post knowledge measures if you can add any observed-behavior indicator (e.g., actual verification actions, not just intent to verify).	Build in a genuine follow-up point (3–6 months out) even if your initial pilot period is short — both country teams recommended this explicitly as a next step.

7. Lessons from Mongolia and the Philippines

Drawing together what both country teams reflected on across the life of the project, this toolkit distinguishes what appears to be a common, transferable principle from what was a context-specific adaptation.

Common principles confirmed by both country experiences:

- **A connected evidence-to-action sequence works.** Both country teams explicitly credited moving from landscape mapping → focused audience research → collaborative design → pilot → dissemination as more effective than applying a predetermined set of activities.
- **Audience segmentation and local relevance are central,** not optional add-ons. Mongolia's urban/rural content differentiation and the Philippines' beneficiary/non-beneficiary message framing both trace directly to this principle.
- **Youth leadership and trusted intermediaries matter more than institutional authority alone.** Peer educators in Mongolia and youth creatives/journalism students in the Philippines both served as more credible messengers than an outside expert voice would have been.
- **Continuous feedback loops improve relevance.** Both pilots built in mechanisms (an online community in Mongolia; social listening and structured prompts in the Philippines) to let the audience shape content as the intervention proceeded.
- **A one-month implementation window is too short.** Both country teams state this without qualification: "the pilot does not aim to directly reduce vulnerability within a short timeframe" (Mongolia); "the pilot was short... it should therefore be treated as an early feasibility test" (Philippines). Both recommend 6–9 months for any future iteration.
- **Reach and participation figures are not evidence of sustained change,** and both country teams were careful to say so explicitly rather than implying otherwise.

Context-specific adaptations that should not be assumed to transfer automatically:

- Mongolia's urban/rural split by *emotional vs. cognitive* vulnerability mechanism was a specific empirical finding of its DVI study — another context might show a different or no such split, and should verify this with its own Section 3 assessment rather than assuming it.
- The Philippines' *utang na loob* framing and its "Inquisitive Influencer" non-confrontational tone were shaped by a specific cultural and political dynamic around government aid; a different topic or country context may call for a different tone and framing entirely.
- Mongolia's substitution of educational institution for CSO partner, and its substitution of young teachers for unavailable student peer educators, were pragmatic local fixes — worth knowing about as options, not as a universal recipe.

What worked well vs. what proved difficult:

Worked well: differentiated content by audience segment; peer/trusted-messenger delivery; light-touch verification rather than heavy editorial process; embedding activities within existing local institutions (schools, lifelong learning centres, an established digital civic organization) rather than building new structures from scratch; explicit co-design with target audiences before finalizing the intervention.

Proved difficult: recruiting and retaining CSO partners with sufficient permanent capacity; scheduling around competing local events and academic calendars; measuring anything beyond immediate self-reported knowledge within a one-month window; maintaining consistent documentation quality across multiple implementation sites.

Sustainability signals:

In Mongolia, the Mongolian Fact-Checking Center retained ownership of the campaign's social channels and planned to reactivate paid promotion in September 2026; trained facilitators are positioned to continue mentoring peer educators and to support participation in an international fact-checking competition (GenAsia, November 2026). In the Philippines, BUILD Pilipinas plans to replicate the youth-led hyperlocal

Facebook framework in other provinces using the operational lessons from Iloilo, though the model is described as "replicable as a framework — not as a fixed content package."

Considerations for future programming:

Future initiatives would benefit from: (1) distinct and realistic periods for research, design, implementation, and outcome measurement, planned separately rather than compressed together; (2) implementation lasting six to nine months intervention rather than one month; (3) stable local institutional partnerships; and (4) measurement of sustained change beyond immediate participation and social media reach.

The project's own broader reflection: vulnerability to disinformation operates at societal, institutional, community, and individual levels simultaneously, and while emerging democracies may face challenges at all these levels, the specific combination differs by country, community, and audience group. This means that implementing organizations should not expect to apply a model exactly as designed elsewhere; instead, approaches need to be adapted to local contexts, needs, and capacities.

8. Ready-to-Use Templates and Annexes

These templates operationalize the frameworks introduced in Sections 2–6. Each is a blank, adaptable tool, not project data — built directly from the structures the project itself used.

Template 1: Rapid Context-Assessment Checklist

(Use for Section 2 — actors, channels, content, timing, current responses; ~2–5 days for a desk-based version)

Element	Notes on your context
Government/state actors	
Domestic political actors	
Foreign/foreign-aligned actors	
PR/media intermediaries	
Dominant platform(s)	
Migration path (public → private → offline?)	
Top 2–3 recurring narrative themes	
Dominant content format (text/image, doctored media, synthetic/AI)	
Peak timing (elections / crises / anniversaries)	
Existing legal/regulatory measures and their risks	
Existing fact-checking or literacy initiatives	
Known gaps in current responses	

Template 2: Audience Vulnerability Snapshot

(Use for Section 3; ~1–2 weeks if running your own light interviews or FGDs)

- Chosen method: ☐ Quantitative index ☐ Qualitative FGD/interviews ☐ Combination
- Target audience/segment: _____
- Ability to distinguish false from true information: _____
- Evidence of general distrust vs. specific susceptibility: _____
- Role of emotional reactions in processing/sharing: _____
- Role of social conformity / trusted networks: _____
- Daily priorities that compete with or connect to your message: _____
- Position on the passive–active information-seeking spectrum: _____

Template 3: Theory of Change Canvas

(Use for Section 4; ~half a day as a team exercise)

If [intervention component] is delivered/established, then [immediate result], because [mechanism]. If [second component] is added, then [second result], building on the first. If [third component] is added, then [participatory/behavioral shift]. As a result, over time, [longer-term outcome] — while recognizing this requires [conditions/time/support not yet confirmed].

Template 4: Intervention Objectives and Indicators Worksheet

(Use for Section 4; ~half a day, one worksheet per objective level)

Level	Objective	Indicator(s)	Data source	Frequency
Knowledge				
Attitude				
Practice				

Template 5: Message-Route Testing Worksheet

(Use for Sections 4–5; ~1 day including participant testing)

Route	Core message	Audience segment tested	Reaction (positive/mixed/negative)	Risk noted
Route 1				
Route 2				
Route 3				

Template 6: Intervention Component Planning Table

(Use for Section 5; ~half a day per intervention component)

Component	Vulnerability mechanism it addresses	Target audience/segment	Channel	Messenger	Verification approach

Template 7: M&E Levels Tracker

(Use for Section 6 — fill in only what you can genuinely measure; revisit monthly during implementation)

Level	Indicator	Baseline	Result	Can this be claimed as evidence of...?
Reach/participation				Reach only
Engagement				Engagement only
Immediate learning/confidence				Immediate learning only
Behavioral intention				Intention only
Observed practice				Practice, if directly observed
Sustained change (requires follow-up)				Sustained change, only with delayed measurement

Template 8: Editorial/Verification Mini-Protocol

(Adapted directly from the Philippines pilot's light-touch model; a one-time setup, then a per-post checklist)

- ☐ Verify before posting (source, date, origin)
- ☐ Use credible, named sources
- ☐ Classify content type (informational / explanatory / community-generated / opinion)
- ☐ Ensure content is fair, accurate, and complete
- ☐ No hate speech or misinformation
- ☐ Ethical and community-centered framing
- ☐ Clear correction procedure if an error is identified

Template 9: Challenges and Mitigation Log

(Use throughout implementation; update as issues arise)

Challenge encountered	Response/mitigation	Implication for future programming

Template 10: Co-Design Workshop Agenda

(Adapted from both countries' co-design workshops; ~half a day to a full day)

1. Present Section 2/3 findings in plain language to stakeholders and audience representatives
2. Small-group discussion: what would resonate with this audience, and what wouldn't?
3. Identify trusted messengers and existing local structures to build on
4. Test 2–3 draft message frames or activity concepts with participants directly
5. Capture concrete recommendations and assign them to specific design decisions
6. Confirm what will be monitored, and at which of the six evidence levels (Template 7)

Glossary of Key Terms

A short reference for terms used throughout this toolkit that may be unfamiliar outside the project's own field or region.

Co-design — A facilitated process of designing an intervention together with the people it's meant to serve and relevant local stakeholders, rather than designing it for them in advance.

DVI (Disinformation Vulnerability Index) — A composite score used in Mongolia's youth study, combining ability to spot false information, trust in true information, and willingness to share false information.

FGD (Focus Group Discussion) — A small, guided group conversation (commonly 6–10 participants) used to gather in-depth, qualitative insight into how a specific audience thinks and talks about an issue.

Hyperlocal (platform) — A community-focused information channel — most often a Facebook page in this project's case — that covers a specific town, district, or neighborhood rather than national news.

MIL (Media and Information Literacy) — The set of skills involved in accessing, understanding, evaluating, and creating information and media content responsibly.

Pre-bunking — Warning people about a likely misleading narrative before they encounter it, as opposed to fact-checking or "debunking" it after the fact.

SBCC (Social and Behavior Change Communication) — A structured communications approach that sequences objectives across three levels: Knowledge (what people know), Attitude (how they feel), and Practice (what they do).

Theory of change — An explicit statement of the logic behind an intervention, usually written as a chain of "if this, then that, because..." statements connecting activities to intended results.

This toolkit was compiled entirely from the documented evidence, design materials, and narrative reports of the "Action for Integrity and Democracy Against Disinformation" project (Mongolia and the Philippines, 2025–2026). Organizations adapting this toolkit are encouraged to consult the full source reports listed in Section 1 for complete methodological detail.

